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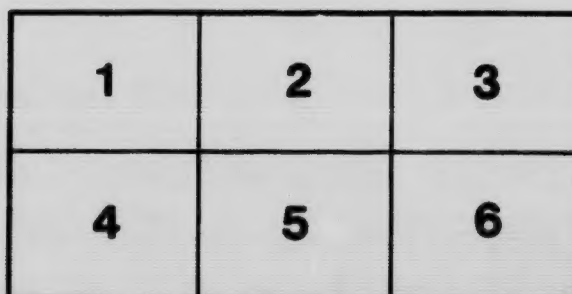
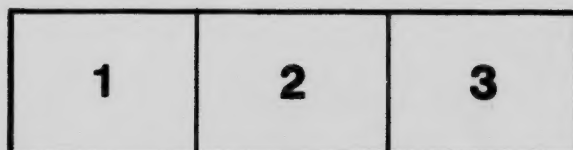
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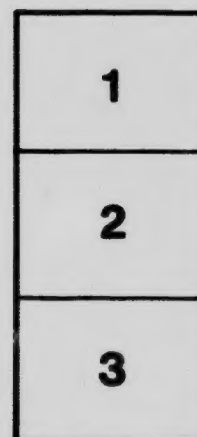
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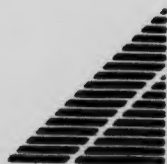
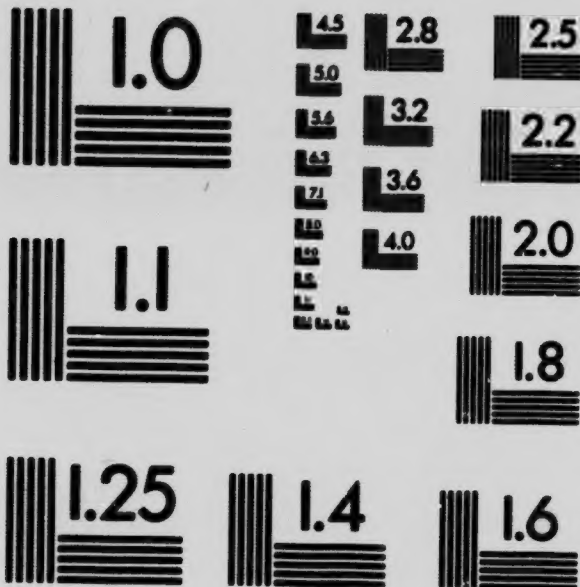
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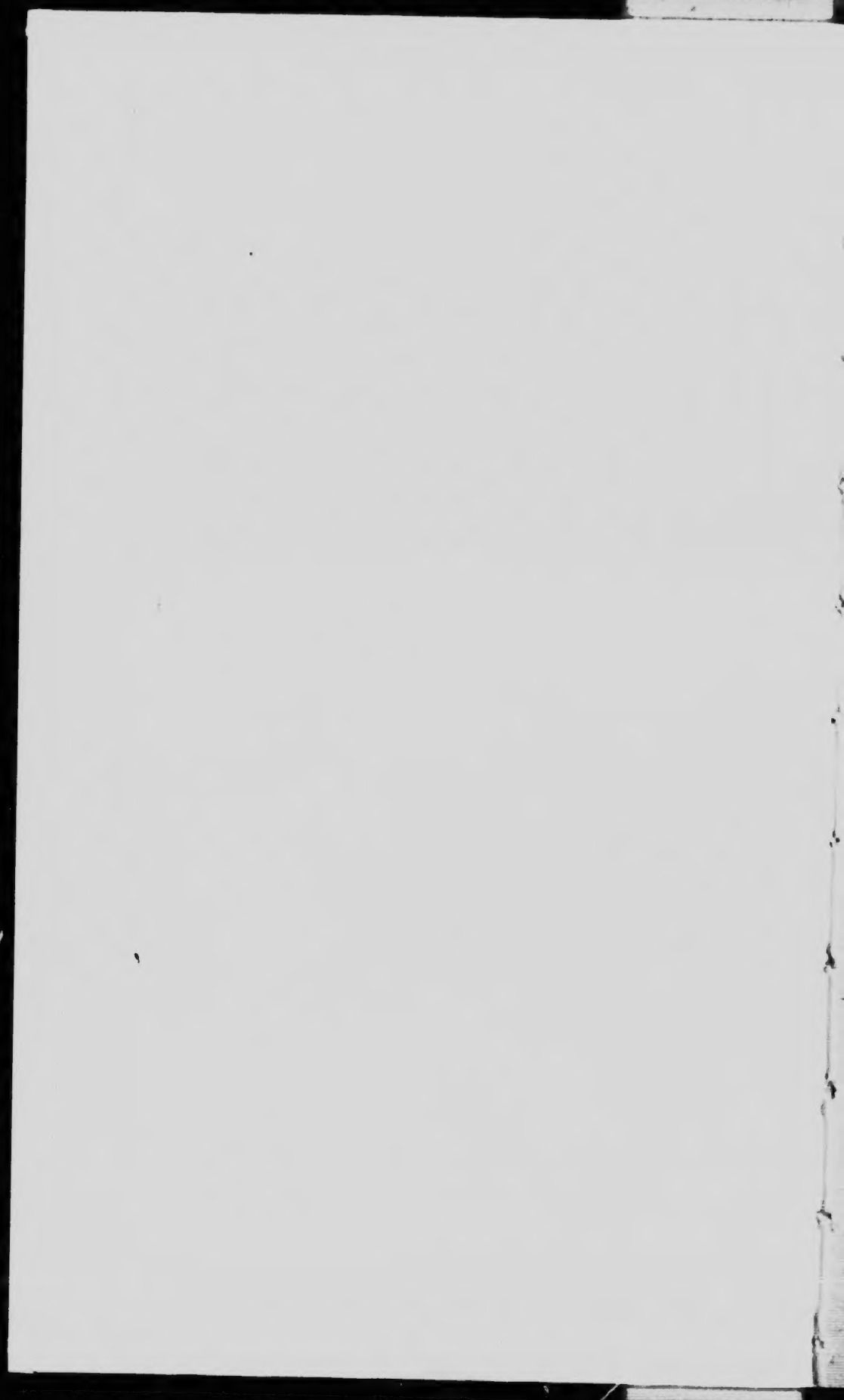
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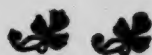


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**THE POSITION
OF THE
LIMIT HOLDER
IN THE
Province of Quebec**



BY ONE OF THEMSELVES

Quibno 1906.

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1906

Paul G. Allen

THE recent speeches of Messrs. Kelly and Prevost in the Legislative Assembly at Quebec regarding the Limit Holder and the settler, are the entering wedges of a dangerous attack upon the rights of the former. While neither of these gentlemen are as rabid in their utterances as others have been, it is quite evident that they regard the rights of the Limit Holder as secondary to the supposed interests of the Colonist and the people at large of Quebec. It is quite certain that their remarks, if allowed to remain unanswered, will appeal to the average person who is uninformed as to the true conditions. They propose in one way or the other to take the timber from the Limit Holder who has purchased it from the people in good faith and give it back to *some* of the people without reimbursing the Limit Holder. Stripped of all verbiage what they propose to do amounts

to confiscation and nothing less. The so-called advocates of the rights of the settlers are blindly ignoring the rights of anybody else and in order to accomplish their ends are quite willing to see great industries which are not only of value but a necessity to the whole Province destroyed.

Granted that in some cases these people are sincere, they never understand the subject they are discussing. They jumble up the laws of Forestry, the preservation of the waterways, colonization and the aggressions of the Limit Holders to such an extent that the speech or argument which exploits such views as Messrs. Kelly and Prevost express and which can not be shown to be absolutely ridiculous has yet to be made. The fact is, the forests of Canada have been so large, that when the Government has taken a few miles from a Limit Holder the latter has done little but grumble, always thinking there was plenty left,

and this quiescent attitude has led to more and more aggressions on their rights, but it is now high time a halt was called and the position clearly defined so that the situation can not be left at the mercy of every change in politics or used as a battle cry by one party or another. It is true that the forests of Quebec are of vast interest to the people of that Province, but this means the *whole* people of this Province and not the comparative few who live on the edge of the forest and who desire to get the timber without paying for it.

What does a settler do with his forest lot? He strips it as fast as he can and then tries to get another, in the meantime stealing as much as he can from the Limit Holder besides. He pays nothing to the people for the stumpage and makes no return whatever for what he receives. He pays no fire tax, although he is the cause of most of the fires, in fact that are

many instances in which he will not go a hundred yards to put a pail of water on a fire, which perhaps a few days later all the fire apparatus in Canada could not extinguish. After he has burned or cleared off all the land in his immediate vicinity, either he or some of his smarter neighbors go to their representatives, and the old familiar whine about the poor colonist is raised.

Now on the other hand let us see what the Timber Limit Holder does. To start with, he purchases his limit either from the Government or some one to whom the Government has sold and he then proceeds to organize his business. He builds roads and dams and improves the rivers making it possible to float logs on rivers that have hitherto been impassible. He purchases land for his mill sites and erects the necessary buildings. When he purchases the limits, if it is not done directly from the Government,

he pays a transfer tax of \$4 per mile and after that he pays \$3 per square mile annually and a fire tax as well. In addition to the above he pays the people an enormous sum every year for stumpage. According to the size of the operation he probably gives employment directly or indirectly to everybody in the usually sparsely settled districts around him. He makes it possible for these people to remain in their homes and on their farms instead of going to the States. He usually directly increases the business of every tradesman in the place where he is located and more than that he makes it possible for them to give credit to the people who are working for him, and as a rule he is a steady contributor to the Church and the poor in his vicinity. He buys his machinery from the manufacturing parts of Canada and his constant need of supplies of all kinds is in a measure one of the greatest support-

ers of miscellaneous Canadian trade. Outside of the fire tax he pays, he employs more and better men than the Government does as fire rangers. He is a better practical forester than any theorist so far as his own territory is concerned, for as a rule, any set of limits of any size is in this respect a proposition by itself and there are certain matters in connection with the cutting which can not be regulated by any fixed rules, for instance, there may be found sections of territory where spruce grows so thickly that it chokes and stunts its own growth like a garden filled with weeds, there is not enough nourishment in the soil and this condition will remain until it is thinned out, which must be done before it will produce merchantable timber. Again there are sections of country where a dry rot will attack the trees after they attain a medium size and this is probably due to another condition of

the soil, it is particularly the case with lowland balsam and spruce, and if the tree is to be utilized, it must be cut before it attains the size specified by the present regulation. I have noticed the same thing is true of pine in certain localities. All modern lumbermen are familiar with these facts and conserve their forests by cutting accordingly, it is to their best interest to do so and results in the most practical forestry.

We are to be congratulated upon the fact that the forestry enthusiast of the present day is beginning to recognize these facts and consequently the lumberman and those who are interested in forestry are getting very close together in their ideas, each can teach the other something.

The greater part of the remaining forest lands in Quebec are unfit for cultivation, and even where they are so, to some extent they by no means repay the people of the province at

large, they may support a miserable family while the timber is being cut and then all there is to show for it is denuded land and a tumbled down cabin, while the effort to clear that particular place is sure to have done more or less damage by fire. The abandoned farms of New Hampshire, Connecticut and other States, show the futility of some of the colonization dreams. What forest is left in the State of New York is a good example of what causes the real destruction of forest land. There where the lumberman is undisturbed by settlements he is going over the same cuttings time and time again and will be indefinitely, and the forest lands are many times the value of the adjacent cleared lands not only to the individual who owns it but to the States, and this is so recognized by the latter.

Where forest land is destroyed the water courses are spoiled or ruined,

the spongy or upper soil is gone and the water running over bare grounds results in too much at one time and not enough in another to the great injury in many instances of manufacturing interests.

Mr. Kelly does not seem to wish to be unreasonable, but apparently he is only acquainted with one side of the controversy. He suggests that a Limit Holder might be given land in one place to compensate him for that taken from him in another and this suggestion is evidently made in a spirit of fair play, but how absurd it would be to take property adjacent to a market away and substitute for it land which is possibly near no available market, or take another instance, does Mr. Kelly mean that after a man has expended many thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in improvements and establishing his business that he should be told to move on and leave these

behind? There is only one excuse for taking away the timber from a legitimate Limit Holder and that is public necessity, and in that case it should be expropriated and full damage paid to the owner. The existing interpretation of the forest laws is due more to greed and unscrupulousness than anything else and in most cases those who are talking of looking after the interests of the settler are merely covering up their own attempts to despoil others. Mr. Kelly attempts to excuse some of his constituents for holding lots without fulfilling conditions under which they received them claiming that the lots can not be reached for want of roads. Are others to be robbed because Mr. Kelly's freinds chose to select their lots in unaccessible places, the very fact that they have located these lots and do not live on them is enough to show that they are not *bona-fide* settlers.

It would be interesting to know how many business interests are closely allied with ours in the above, starting out with two of the greatest, namely the Banks and the Railroads it would seem as though we would receive great support from all sides if we are only wise enough to look after our own interests.

If the lumberman could be certain that his timber would not be taken from him, it would not only encourage him to preserve what he has but would probably result in his rendering valuable assistance in reforestring denuded or burned lands. The whole colonization programme is entirely inconsistent with preserving the forests and the waterways because the settler must clear the land absolutely if he wants a farm and this is the only excuse he has for being given a timber lot at the expense of the people and the Limit Holder.

• Of course so far as the remaining

public lands are concerned, the Government can act as its policy dictates, but there is no shadow of an excuse for taking away the timber from one man to whom they have already sold it and giving it to another, and underneath the attempts to do so, personal motives in many cases can be found.



